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OR 1 Scientology  
(Church of)  
CIA 4.01 Domestic Spying

# Church Sues CIA After Drawing a Blank

The Central Intelligence Agency was sued in federal court by the Church of Scientology to disclose some of its controversial files compiled while conducting domestic surveillance activities in violation of its charter.

The CIA admitted in a letter to the church's attorneys that the agency's files "contain communication from and to certain foreign governments and other agencies of the U.S. government" but refused to release them to the Scientologists.

THE REASONS, the CIA said, were that it would force the agency to reveal foreign liaison contacts, threaten their intelligence sources and invade personal privacy.

A church spokesman termed the CIA's reasoning as "psychotic double think. They will secretly spy on you," the Rev. Lawrence Wilber from the national offices in Los Angeles, said, "then refuse to let you see the file to protect privacy. They sound like something from 'Alice in Wonderland' but the humor is brief."

One document the CIA turned over to church officials, Wilber said, had four of the six pages entirely blanked out. "They left the page numbers," he quipped "so we wouldn't get the blank pages mixed up." Wilber charged the CIA with "trying to suppress evidence that they have spied on religious organizations and exchanged information with other agencies.

We are left with no choice but legal action."

CHURCH SPOKESMEN indicated that the CIA had not listed any documents in agency files that were dated later than 1969. "The missing area was the time of 'dirty tricks' and 'enemies lists,'" Wilber said.

"We have no reason to believe they have stopped despite the revelations in the press and the Congress. The CIA learned years ago that they can ride out any storm. But that was before Watergate," he said.

"The conflict now is between the CIA's secrecy and the citizens' privacy. We are quite confident the court will rule for the latter," Wilber said.

The church recently prompted the first congressional investigation of Interpol, the private international police association as the result of a 15-month study of the controversial intelligence network presented to Sen. Joseph Montoya, D-N.M.